filed Scott, Peter Dale

Rt. 8, Rt. 12 after 8/16
Frederick, Md. 21701
8/12/75

Mr. Russell Stetler
424 North St.,
Oakland, Cal. 94609

Dear Mr. Stetler,

This will no doubt confirm all the fine things you have heard about me and more than satisfy you that my reputation for diplomacy and tact are more than deserved.

Jim Lesar has sent me a copy of your 8/4/75 letter and two unnumbered pages, one headed intro, the other apparently the conclusion.

You may recall that my agreement to the selection of my work that you sought was less than enthusiastic. If I did not then express misgivings I had them, primarily based on the title and the selection of my work you found appropriate to that title. This told me that the "politics" were preconceptions to which all would be tailored. While this is by no means unique, it is not scholarly, it is less than intellectual honesty, and is is the last thing the hope of any real accomplishment on this subject now requires. That it has withstood all the ravings of all the experts to this point shames the earlier wonders of the world.

From this brevity I could, without repetition or irrelevance, spend an entire day and not fully respond to your question, "have we omitted anything important or if we have said anything which is not accurate."

The indulgence of the vanities and prejudices of your colleagues required an initial omission of what detached people would find important. There is no point in addressing that or other omission, part of which come from the sublimity of ignorance, factual and scientific. They can't be accidental.

I don't really care what you say and do not say about this matter. I know enough about the field and have had experiences enough with most of the people to be without expectation of substantial work and to anticipate the probability of pot-boiling, with or without recognition of it, from the changed climate. So I'm not going to take the time to go into detail. However, if you want it, phone me, prepared to tape record it in advance. I'd prefer if you do this that you make it not earlier than 4:30 p.m. your time to let me prepare with a decent meal. Not that this, if a fair sample, might not cause its loss.

I am aware of space problems in any anthology and of the added problems of one whose main function may be essentially literary in a field of enormous scope, incredible detail, conflicting opinions and other controversies. You may feel the need to serve many interests and not be able to.

However, none of these factors justify error or the indulgence of prejudice. You assume dual responsibilities: to those you quote and to those who read your book. You owe both the best possible effort to meet these responsibilities, regardless of what may be special prejudices or self-concepts.

Beginning with the first sentence ignorance and factual error permeate this crap. The second sentence begins, "Critics...were struck by...." without date or any other identification. By critics I presume you mean here that embodiement of the ultimate in dependability, A.J.Weberman? Perhaps the eminent Garrison? All these critics did this at the same time? Which is to say their work was completed 2/15/65?

In the last graf on this page you again use the same construction, "heightened critics' curiosity..."

What you refer to was written a year and a half before any other book appeared. Prior to the publication of any other book the author of that one had, to the knowledge of at least one of your associates, started to battle for this material with Hoover.

Why not credit it, then, to the Ralph Schoenmans and Dick Gregorys and Al Chapmans?

In what follows in the first graf about lead I'd expect more of a Berkeley education in physics. Even, given wartime conditions and scarcities, perhaps "components, " depending on the size of the samples.

The NAAs did not "supplement" the spectros from what we do know.

I think you can get an argument in this specific case on "Two fragments cannot originate from one source unless their spectra are identical..."

To say nothing about "the certainty that all the fragments came from one gun." I didn't know the gun fragmented.

There were "a number of attempts to obtain the test results." Most were by expenditure of a postage stamp, no more. Another was insane.

The reference to my filing "a suit" under FOIA is false. I filed two.

The FBI did not "release" and it was not "73 pages of raw data from the spectrographic tests."

Nichols is not the first to claim that this stuff was "incomplete" or erroneous or incomplete. We did that, in court, before Nichols had any copies, certainly long before his statement, to which you manage not to do justice. He said much more and if you are going to quote him you should do it faithfully.

If you are going to quote what people said publicly, Wecht on May 5 was not the first and what he said is about what I'd expect: horseshit. It was then not "to early to draw conclusions as to the [data's] significance and I had done it repeatedly and publicly prior to then. But why not be really faithful to Cyril and quote him on all this being his original work, on all the others jumping on his bandwagon, on his desire to sell tickets to it?

The note you added to the conclusions says that it was in response to the first case filed under the amended act that the act was amended.

Well, I guess magic doesn't end with the magic bullet.

From earlier correspondence with others of fixed mind and opinions and self-concepts I'd expected the reflection of hangups. But so virtuoso a display of common ignorance and irresponsible error does surprise me.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. The omissions are serious. I'll not waste time on them. I'll address them in my own way, my own time and my own work.